



27 July 2016

**Reclaim the City press statement: We condemn the ANC's local government election opportunism**

Regrettably, the ANC's campaign to contest the upcoming local government elections in the City of Cape Town has attempted to marry itself with Reclaim the City's campaign to #StopTheSale of Tafelberg.

We encourage robust debate between political parties on the use of prime public land for affordable housing and on the injustice of apartheid spatial planning in our city. A healthy democracy requires this type of debate in legislatures, all spheres of government and in public.

Black African and coloured working class people face spatial violence daily. The struggle for urban land justice affects working class people in cities across South Africa. The problems are complex and cannot be solved overnight. Political parties should not seize on this only as canvassing tool for votes at the eleventh hour.

We object to political parties insinuating that a group as diverse as Reclaim the City would align as part of its election platform. One of Reclaim the City's guiding principles is that we are non-partisan and are not aligned with any political party.

Our engagement is with government, irrespective of which party governs. Since 1994, all levels of government have failed to reverse the legacy of spatial apartheid in our cities. Our campaign has focused on Tafelberg, because of the urgency around the sale.

Our research has exposed that the Western Cape Government, through its approach to the use of prime public land, has contempt for Black African and coloured working class people and their need for affordable housing in the inner city.

However, the ANC-run national government has fared no better. National government has also failed to release other substantial prime public properties, needed for affordable housing. These include: Erf 81 in Tamboerskloof; Fort Wynyard in Greenpoint; Wingsfield in Maitland.

It is ironic then, that the ANC Western Cape campaign on this platform to distinguish itself from the ruling DA. A statement by ANC provincial secretary Faiez Jacobs ("DA's spatial planning continuing legacy of apartheid, says ANC", Cape Times, 26 July 2016: pg 4) extensively paraphrased Ndifuna Ukwazi research, conducted in support of Reclaim the City, on the Tafelberg sale in Sea Point.

We are happy for our campaign research to stimulate the election debate. We draw the line, however, when a political party associates itself with us on a public platform.

Yesterday, the ANC Western Cape invited us to participate in an election rally in Wynberg. We declined and explicitly refused permission for our organisation's name to be used in any public communication about the event. This request was not respected by the ANC Western Cape. This

As a campaign, we have guarded against party political influence. Last week, Reclaim the City's Sea Point committee reached consensus that Thandeka Sisusa, former campaign spokesperson, would step down after it emerged that she had registered to stand as the ANC candidate for ward councillor in Sea Point. She also recused herself from candidacy for ward councillor.

The fight for Tafelberg and a desegregated city is bigger than the next week of party politics.

*For comment:*

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